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<Field Report>Report on
International Co-Workshop in
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peasants, who, therefore, were not willing to follow the government policy. The decline of export prices in the mid-1980s worsened the situation. The government finance continued to deteriorate. It could not afford any development program for poorest areas in the Dry Zone.

In 1988, the government began to introduce a market economy. Peasants were allowed to sell most of their crops at market prices. Also, a new rice variety suited to the winter season was introduced, while old irrigation systems were renovated, and new cropping systems developed for the winter rice. The income of villagers was much raised.

Another change in the policy was emphasis on tourism as a means of earning foreign exchange. Historical and archaeological sites were developed as tourist attractions. The whole Bagan area was designated as the Archaeological Zone. Each foreign visitor is required to pay an admission fee in US dollar to visit Bagan. When

the Pyu sites are restored and become the Archaeological Zones in future, we will be charged entry fees.

T. Itoh is rather pessimistic about the effectiveness of these policies, that is, rice and tourism, for sustainability of the peasants life in the Dry Zone. Tourism may create some local employment, but, under the present government policy, most of the profit would go to the central government. The historical and archaeological findings suggest the great diversity of farming system of the Dry Zone in the past, which included cultivation of, apart from rice, jowar, sesame, millet, pulses, and cotton, as well as animal husbandry. Concentrating efforts on the production of rice in monocultural systems for sale on the world market, which is out of control of the Myanmar government, cannot guarantee the sustainable livelihood for the peasants of the Dry Zone, either.

**Report on International Co-Workshop on the Projects of “Inter-ethnic Relations
in the Making of Mainland Southeast Asia (CSEAS, Kyoto University)” and
“Social and Cultural History of the Tai Peoples (Chulalongkorn University)”
at Chiang Mai Orchid Hotel, Chiang Mai, Thailand,
March 28–29, 1998**

By HAYASHI Yukio*

Conducting empirical field studies in mainland Southeast Asia was impossible until the middle of the 1980s except in Thailand. Due to the end of the Cold War, however, the region has entered into a new era. Foreigners are gradually being

permitted to visit Thailand's neighboring socialist states that are opening their markets to the outside world. Academic networking has also begun especially among the countries along the Mekong, and inter-regional cooperation across national boundaries has been rapidly developing.

With this background, current research on Tai peoples and their neighbors across national

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Field Reports

boundaries is entering a period of mushrooming growth. Academic interest in comparative perspectives is shared not only among foreigners, most of whom are historians, linguists and ethnologists, but also among native intellectuals trying to reconstruct their past in a broad sense, seeking cultural identity. One of the biggest projects currently being conducted is the nationwide project entitled "Social and Cultural History of the Tai Peoples," led by Professor Chatthip Nartsupha, Chulalongkorn University. This project is publishing many research results including some important document studies. This project has links with groups of intellectuals abroad, and it is also making a great contribution to Southeast Asian studies in general.

In Japan, young Japanese scholars who are interested in Southeast Asian societies and cultures, especially those who have studied ethnic groups in the region, came together at the first seminar on "Inter-ethnic Relations in the Making of Mainland Southeast Asia" January 6-7, 1995. This small gathering was held at the Center for Southeast Asian Studies [CSEAS], Kyoto University. Most of the participants were active, young field workers, who later formed a small research group with financial support from the Japanese Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, from April 1995 to March 1997. During the next two years, graduate students and Ph.D. candidates who were studying several groups in mainland Southeast Asia and southwestern China got together in 12 seminars in total. Some of the papers presented in these seminars have been compiled and published in a special issue of *Tonan Ajia Kenkyu* (Southeast Asian Studies), the journal of CSEAS, Kyoto University (1998, vol. 35, no. 4).

It must be said that we did not try to impose or adopt a new paradigm in terms of one single theoretical perspective. On the contrary, we have tried to encourage different perspectives in

understanding the cultural diversity in the region. Therefore, our views are basically descriptive in form. What we have shared here, however, is the belief that various realities of each ethnic group should be understood in relation to the particular locality in the region.

With such a background, the idea of this international workshop arose in March, 1997, in conversations between Thai scholars and the core members of the young Japanese group. We confirmed with each other then that we should exchange not only data obtained but also our viewpoints. This international workshop, therefore, had as its central aim the introduction and sharing of research findings and related ideas, trying to overcome boundaries of countries and disciplines. Furthermore, this workshop was the first attempt to realize future cooperation not only between Thailand and Japan but among all scholars interested in how the Tai and their neighbors across national boundaries are building new formulations of ethnic diversity in the region. Sharing our experiences and knowledge, and fostering the exchange of ideas about the subject, it was hoped that this workshop would also offer an opportunity for all participants to form personal ties and above all to exchange ideas and projects from which future progress will derive.

The workshop had 40 participants the first day and 35 the second. Unfortunately, Professor Chatthip, a co-organizer of the gathering, could not attend due to illness, but Professor Cholthira Satyawadhna (Rangsit University) participated as the representative of his project. Associate Professor Theeraphan Luangthongkham (Chulalongkorn University) also attended as representative of the Thai Research Fund. Participants came from numerous countries as well as from Chiang Mai, such as Professors Rujaya Abhakorn and Anan Ganjanapan (Chiang Mai University), all of whom added to the lively exchange of

ideas and discussion. Various kinds of data were presented and many subjects were discussed. Among them, the dialogue between historians and anthropologists seemed to be of importance. On the other hand, questions about how the situational approach to ethnic groups and their identity could be integrated into the historical/substantial approaches still remain to be resolved.

We enjoyed a fruitful meeting for two days. I believe that the main purpose of the co-workshop was fully realized due to the kind cooperative friendship shown by all the participants. At the same time, dialogue on the subject has not come to a finish, but has just started for future cooperation.

Program of the Workshop carried out

March 28, 1998 (9:00–18:30)

— Introductory Remarks —

“The Scope of the Inter-ethnic Relations in the Making of Mainland Southeast Asia.”

Hayashi, Yukio (CSEAS, Kyoto University)

“Welcome Speech.”

Cholthira Satyawadhna (Rangsit University)

“The Values of and Perspectives on Tai Studies.”

Chatthip Nartsupha (Chulalongkorn University)* paper distributed

“On the History of Muang Sing (Laos): The Fate of a Lue Principality.”

Grabowsky, Volker (National University of Laos)

“Lan Na History in the Lu Chronicles.”

Ratanaporn Sethakul (Payap University)

“The Ethnic Groups in Chiang Mai.”

Aronrut Wichienkeo (Chiang Mai Raja-

bhat Institute)

“Being Lue, and Not Being Lue.”

Baba, Yuji (Mie Prefectural College of Nursing)

“Cultural Identity and Ethnic Boundary of the Tai Nuea in the Yunnan-Burma Periphery.”

Hasegawa, Kiyoshi (Gifu University for Education and Languages)

Yang Guanyuan (Yunnan Institute for Nationalities)

“An Anthropological Analysis of Burmanization of the Shan.”

Takatani, Michio (Hiroshima University)

March 29, 1998 (9:00–17:45)

“The Relation and Conception of Thais to the Word ‘Lao’.”

Thavesilp Subwattana (Mahasarakham University)

“Looking Laos through Buddhism.”

Songkoon Chantachon (Mahasarakham University)

“Differentiation and Involution of Ethno-Regional Lao Identity in Northeast Thailand and Lao P. D. R.”

Hayashi, Yukio (CSEAS, Kyoto University)

“Tai Dam (Black Tai) in Lao P. D. R.: Important Rituals and Beliefs.”

Prachan Rakpong (Chiang Mai Rajabhat Institute)

“Mobility and Interethnic Relationships among Karen Women and Men in Northwest Thailand: Past and Present.”

Hayami, Yoko (CSEAS, Kyoto University)

Discussion